

times, shows the true Christian face and clear conscience, as well as the suffering heart and soul of the Orthodox Christian Serbian people—for all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. The letter of the Bishop of Raška-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija, sent on Great Friday 1999 to officials of the United States and Western European countries expressed, during the difficult days of NATO's mad bombing of the innocent Serbian people and Serbian Kosovo, the position of all Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija and other Serbian lands. However, the almighty rulers of the West did not wish to hear their voice any more than did the tyrant Slobodan Milošević with whom the West spoke all the time, and only with him among all Serbs and in the name of all Serbs everywhere, and negotiated and reached an agreement regarding the fate of all Serbs, including Orthodox Serbs already crucified between the Communists and the Albanians in Serbian Kosovo and Metohija. However, despite this both he and they now mutually and unconscionably accuse each other as the exclusive culprit, while the victims of both "victors" are the innocent poor folk of Kosovo and Metohija, among whom Christ the Crucified spreads his arms among burned down and destroyed churches, awaiting a flock that is not yet there, whose numbers are depleted.

Nonetheless, we believe in God's justice but in human justice, too; and in the good will of those just people in the international community who wish peace and good to all people and nations, especially in the windy and tempestuous Balkans, which has been and remains a part of free, democratic and cultured, Christian Europe. We place our hope in the God of Justice, Truth and Freedom, in the Triune God of evangelical love and stauropaschal resurrection and salvation, that He will help us in our Golgotha-like crucifixion. For God can help us and He wants to help everyone. That is why we, as a Church and a Christian and Orthodox people neither seek nor call for revenge through intolerance and hate, but cry together with the righteous Job: *"If we have received good things of the hand of the Lord, shall we not endure evil things?"*

But, as we have said, we believe that we will also receive the help of the people who rule the fate of small and weak nations, and turn finally toward justice and democracy, truth and freedom for all in Kosovo and Metohija. That it is why we again ask them, in sincere human and Christian fashion, after this bitter five year long experience in Kosovo: Why has the innocent Serbian people been bombed? If it was because of a tyrant, then the Serbian people has already been doubly punished. For bombing did not destroy the tyrant, it only increased the tyranny and today placed into other hands. For the present situation of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija is double revenge: by Milošević and unfortunately by the Albanians—in the presence of NATO and the international community embodied in UNMIK. Howe the Serbian people experienced the bombing was best expressed by its greatest living poet: "We are just tar-

gets on their screens, our fate is a part of their video game" (Matija Bećković, March 27, 1999). The consequences of the bombing are still tragically present in Serbia, especially Kosovo, where the most poisonous bombs were dropped. There are increasing numbers of seriously ill people, children, livestock and plants. Is this a "collateral error" on the part of the powerful of this world and the "New World Order"? And an even more concrete consequence of the bombing there is that the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija and their Holy Shrines remain today only a target of infernal hatred by those who have a tradition of vendetta among themselves, let alone toward Orthodox Serbs.

In the end, we must ask: Why should Kosovo, as the Holy Land of the Balkans, not be common land and district (*oblast*—a Slavic word meaning both district and rule) of Serbs and Albanians, Christians and Muslims, two peoples, two languages, two confessions, two cultures, just like—*mutatis mutantis*—the Holy Land for the Israelis and the Palestinians? This common life and coexistence is something the U.S. is advocating in the Holy Land. Why does it not advocate the same in this Holy Land, too, for the sake of God, for the sake of its people and nations, for the sake of its Holy Shrines, for the sake of justice and freedom?



POGROM IN KOSOVO AND METOHİJA March 2004⁵⁷

Almost five years after the arrival of the UN Mission and KFOR in Kosovo and Metohija and ongoing process of ethnic discrimination and attacks on the Serbian Orthodox population and its holy shrines, on March 17–18, 2004 Albanian extremists organized and carried out the biggest attack so far on Serbian enclaves and holy shrines of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The immediate cause for organizing the allegedly spontaneous Albanian demonstrations was a tragic incident in the village of Čabra near Kosovska Mitrovica where three Albanian children drowned on March 16. Prior to any investigation or verification the Albanians accused the Serbs of being responsible for the tragedy and on the same evening (March 16) Albanian language media issued a fervent call for mass demonstrations which by March 17 would escalate into a mass lynching of the Serbian population. A subsequent investigation established that the Serbs were not at all to blame for the tragedy in Čabra and that Albanian extremist groups simply took advantage of this incident to launch an already prepared plan for the expulsion and ethnic cleansing of the remaining Serbs.

⁵⁷ This section is written by Hieromonk Sava Janjić, Dečani, on May 31, 2004.

The results of the two day long rampage are highly discouraging. A total of 19 people were killed, including nine Serbs, while the rest were Albanians killed by international police and soldiers while defending themselves and the besieged Serbian enclaves. Almost 900 people were injured, among them 65 international members of KFOR and UNMIK police. A total of 4,100 people were chased from their homes, most of them Serbs; about 800 Serb and Roma houses and apartments were looted and torched; and 30 Serbian Orthodox holy shrines were either completely destroyed or heavily damaged. Two months after the March pogrom, the main organizers of the pogrom have not been identified or arrested; moreover, not one Albanian or international official has been dismissed or publicly called to task despite the fact that during those two fateful days and nights all Kosovo institutions, the UN Mission and KFOR command experienced complete collapse.

During those days the Serbs were practically left undefended before an onslaught of more than 60,000 Albanians, many of them armed. Only days after the pogrom, leading international officials, including NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Admiral Gregory C. Johnson, assessed that the campaign of violence and ethnic cleansing was well orchestrated. If this assessment is correct, as the entire investigation thus far and numerous analyses show, it is discouraging that two months after the eruption of violence the persons who directly organized the pogrom have not been arrested. There are presently some 270 primarily indirect violators under investigation who were filmed destroying Serb property; however, the question looms large how many of them will ultimately be sentenced, taking into account that none of the Albanians are ready to testify for fear of reprisals.

The riots first began the morning of March 17, 2004, in Kosovska Mitrovica with the attempt of 800 Albanian demonstrators to force their way into the northern, Serbian part of the city. Although there was no organized resistance by UNMIK police at first, very quickly and with the help of armored vehicles and tear gas, UNMIK police pushed back the crowd into the southern part of the city and blocked the bridge across the Ibar River. French and Danish KFOR only showed up at the end and did not even take part in preventing the Albanian breakthrough. After failing to force their way into Northern Mitrovica, a group of about 200 predominantly young Albanians, among whom several young men with characteristic Wahabi beards were observed, headed in the direction of the church of St. Sava in the southern part of Mitrovica, which was protected by members of a KFOR unit from Morocco. Without encountering any resistance from KFOR troops, the attackers broke into the churchyard and the church itself, destroying everything in front of them, and set a fire that demolished the entire interior of the church. In the meanwhile, members of KFOR evacuated the Serbian priest and his family so that the attackers, again without any resistance at all

from KFOR, could also set fire to the parish home. According to existing video footage and photographs, the Moroccan soldiers stood and calmly watched the rampaging Albanians without demonstrating any sign of willingness to stop them in their campaign of destruction. Clashes in the Mitrovica area continued throughout the day and night with new attempts by the Albanians to force their way into the northern part of the city. During these attacks the Albanians used snipers and firearms. According to UNMIK data, during these riots four Serbs were killed and 50 wounded. Also wounded were 35 members of police and some 160 Albanians. A dozen UNMIK vehicles were destroyed. The Albanians then attacked the Serb village of Svinjare, located between Mitrovica and Vučitrn; the entire Serb population of Svinjare was evacuated and the Albanians then torched just about every Serbian house in the village.

By the afternoon of March 17 the violence had spread to the Priština area. Several thousand Albanians headed from the direction of Priština across Veternik toward Čaglavica, where Serbs had blocked the road on March 15 after a young Serb, Jovica Ivić (18), was wounded by unknown attackers from an Albanian vehicle, which fled from the scene. In the meanwhile the students of Priština University coming from rural and undeveloped parts of Kosovo known for their radical views and behavior began a rampage within the city of Priština itself. The students were invited to take part in the attack by the distribution of already prepared flyers calling on them to take part in demonstrations. The Independent Union of Students, which organized this mobilization, played a key role in attacks on Serb property throughout the greater Priština area on March 17–18. The clash near the Serbian village of Čaglavica looked like a medieval pitched battle, as one KFOR soldier described it. Strong police repelled the first Albanian attack and Swedish KFOR forces used water cannon, tear gas, stun grenades and even hand-to-hand combat. International forces blocked the road with a double cordon. Local Serbs also organized themselves to resist. However, despite the relatively strong international forces, the Albanians managed to set fire to several Serbian houses on the outskirts of the village. After 6 o'clock in the evening, approximately 5,000 students arrived from Priština and with the rest of the Albanian throng pushed the international forces in the direction of Gračanica. A direct clash between several thousand Albanians and Serbs ready to defend the approach to Gračanica was imminent. Only later that evening was the escalation of violence stopped by the arrival of the U.S. Marines, who dispersed the Albanian throng by throwing teargas from a helicopter. In the meanwhile, several hundred Albanians attacked the YU Program building in Priština, which housed the remaining 200 or so Serbs in Priština, including about 20 children. After stoning the building and tossing Molotov cocktails at it, the Albanians managed to break in despite the presence of Kosovo police. The Serbs were evacuated at the last moment by the Irish

KFOR contingent while the Albanians systematically looted and destroyed Serbian apartments. Several Serbs were beaten up. The Albanians were even throwing stones and Molotov cocktails and using snipers to shoot at international police who were trying to evacuate the Serbs.

As the violence spread in the areas of Mitrovica and Priština, the riots infected almost every urban center in Kosovo and Metohija during the course of that day, March 17.

By the afternoon of March 17 large groups of Albanians had arrived in organized fashion in the Kosovo Polje area, where they began to attack Serbian houses and property. In the attacks the Serbian hospital in Bresje, St. Sava School, the only post office where Serbs could receive mail and dozens of Serbian houses were burned down. Serbs were literally pulled from the flames by international policemen who were helpless to prevent the destruction of their homes. One has the distinct impression that the goal of the Albanian mob was to expel the Serbs; members of the Kosovo Police Service who pulled the Serbs from their homes headed the mass of Albanians, many among them armed with Kalashnikovs and hand grenades. The situation was similar in Lipljan, where 28 Serb houses were burned down along with utility buildings. It was only thanks to KFOR intervention at the last moment that the destruction of all Serb property in this once largely Serbian town was avoided. Orthodox priest Randjel Denić was wounded by a hand grenade tossed by the Albanians, who attacked two Serbian churches in Lipljan; when he withdrew into his parish home to wash the blood from his face as a result of wounds caused by grenade shrapnel, he was then arrested by Albanian policemen for supposedly trying to set fire to his own church. Many Serbs in Lipljan and Kosovo Polje were wounded, two were killed and hundreds were evacuated from their burning homes (*See attached "Report on Lipljan"*).

Demonstrations in Uroševac began on the afternoon of March 17. At first they were peaceful but soon the Albanian crowd was using hand grenades and Molotov cocktails to attack the Greek troops guarding the church of the Holy Emperor Uroš. Approximately 15 Greek soldiers were wounded defending the church, which luckily only sustained damage to the façade. At the last moment U.S. troops arrived who prevented the mass from breaking into the church, evacuated the wounded Greeks and about a dozen Serbs under a hail of stones and Molotov cocktails. The violence continued in Gnjilane, Vitina and Kamenica as well. In Gnjilane almost all the remaining Serbian houses were burned down but ultimately the church was saved. The Serbian churches in Vitina and Kamenica were attacked but did not sustain significant damage. All the Serbs from Gnjilane were evacuated; in Vitina only a few stayed near the church, which was placed under U.S. protection. In Kamenica many Serbian houses were damaged and several Serbs were beaten up.

The biggest destruction of Serb property and holy shrines occurred in Prizren, until then considered to be

one of the most peaceful urban centers on the territory in the Province largely due to the fact that there were hardly any Serbs left there. By about 3:00 p.m. the organizers of the violence in Prizren ordered the closing of all shops. In the meanwhile, an enormous crowd of Albanians gathered, many of them arriving in organized fashion by bus from outlying parts of the city and surrounding villages. After an attack on the UNMIK building and an unsuccessful attempt by Argentine policemen to stop the masses, the crowd began the systematic destruction of Serbian Orthodox holy shrines and houses in Potkaljaja (the old quarter of Prizren once inhabited primarily by Serbs, few of whom now remain). First Sts. Cyril and Methodius Seminary was burned down; a Serb male refugee burned to death inside and later the burned remains of a woman were found in the basement. The crowd then attacked the Bishop's residence with stones and Molotov cocktails, and German soldiers evacuated Fr. Miron Kosač from the site. After the Bishop's residence was set on fire, the crowd also broke into St. George Cathedral and the smaller church of St. George (Runović's church) located in the courtyard of the main church and set them on fire. Other groups set fires in the churches of the Mother of God of Ljeviša, Christ the Savior and the church of St. Kyriake in Potkaljaja. German KFOR forces not only failed to react but even completely withdrew from their positions in the city. No one from the main KFOR base rushed to assist the members of the international police trying to stop the masses. At approximately 9:00 p.m. a crowd arrived in front of Holy Archangels Monastery located five kilometers south of Prizren as German soldiers evacuated the brotherhood at the last moment. The Albanians then broke into the courtyard and set fire to the monastery, which burned to the ground despite the presence of the German troops who stood and watched the rampaging of the terrorists. Obviously the Albanians' goal was not to clash with KFOR but simply to expel the Serbs and destroy their property and holy shrines. During the course of that night and the next day, March 18, 2004, the Albanians systematically looted and set fire to Serb homes in Potkaljaja where the smaller churches of the Unmercenary Healers (Sts. Cosmas and Damian) and St. Panteleimon were also set on fire. The entire historic Serbian quarter of Prizren was reduced to ashes. According to the testimony of some 30 Serbs evacuated by international forces before the frenzied crowd to the German military base where they remain today, heading the crowd were members of the Kosovo Police Service who forcibly expelled the Serbs from their homes, not even allowing them to take the most basic necessities. Some of the elderly Serbs were brutally beaten by KPS members and subsequently received emergency treatment at Prizren Hospital (*See attached "Report from Peć, Belo Polje, Dečani, Djakovica, Prizren, Holy Archangels and Štrpce"*).

In Djakovica several hundred Albanians began to gather on the afternoon of March 17. At about 5:00 p.m. they

attacked members of UNMIK police, torching and destroying police vehicles. In the evening the Albanian masses attacked the Serbian Orthodox church of the Most Holy Mother of God, where five elderly Serbian women lived in the parish home under the protection of Italian soldiers. The soldiers opened fire on the attackers and wounded nine Albanians. However, since no reinforcements came, the soldiers were forced to evacuate the Serbian grandmothers at the last moment under a hail of stones and Molotov cocktails to the nearby Italian military base and then to Visoki Dečani Monastery, where they are presently located. After the departure of the soldiers and elderly women, members of the Kosovo Police Service were the first to enter the churchyard in Djakovica and open the doors for the crowd. During the course of the night, the church and parish home were not only burned down but also completely leveled with the ground. Later the same night and the next day several thousand Albanians systematically removed the stones of the destroyed church as well as the stones of the church of the Holy Trinity which had been blown up in 1999. In the meanwhile, Albanian extremists dynamited the church of St. Lazarus in Piškote near Djakovica and the church of St. Elijah on the hill near the village of Bistražin south of Djakovica. Not only was the church in Piškote completely obliterated but the Orthodox cemetery in the village was also destroyed.

In the town of Dečani the gathering of the Albanian masses began on March 17 and set fire to several UNMIK vehicles. Prior to this, at about 10:00 a.m. six mortar grenades landed in immediate proximity to Visoki Dečani Monastery. In the nearby city of Peć, after rampaging in front of the UNMIK building, several thousand Albanians then attacked the neighboring Serbian returnee village of Belo Polje, setting fire to all the recently restored Serb houses there, as well as the restored parish home where the Serb returnees were staying. Approximately 20 Serbs were evacuated at the last moment by Italian KFOR, which arrived too late to prevent the destruction of the recently restored village. Several Serbs sustained injuries as they ran from the burning parish home to the Italian transporters. The church, which had also been demolished and torched earlier, was again demolished and torched on the inside but the roof construction remained whole.

On the second day, March 18, 2004, the violence of the Albanian terrorists continued albeit with somewhat reduced fury. Most of the damage done was in the area of central Kosovo. In the evening on March 17 the old church of St. Nicholas in Priština was attacked and burned to the ground together with the parish home and an adjoining building used for baptism. The remaining dozen or so Priština Serbs, including Orthodox priest Miroslav Popadić, were evacuated from the flames of the parish home at the last moment while the crowd rejoiced over the spectacle of the church in flames. In Obilić, too, an organized campaign of destruction of Serb houses and apartments began

during the course of March 18. Serbian houses were largely set aflame by Albanian children, who were led out of their classrooms in organized fashion and armed with Molotov cocktails. By the end of the day, 90 Serbian houses, 40 apartments and some 30 other buildings had been reduced to rubble. The Albanians also burned down the unfinished Serbian Orthodox church in downtown Obilić by filling it with automobile tires and setting them on fire.

The torching of Serb houses continued on March 18 in the area of Kosovo Polje, too, where over 100 Serb homes were destroyed in two days. There were also new attacks in Lipljan but without tragic consequences. In Podujevo that afternoon a mob of about 500 Albanians attacked the Serbian church of St. Andrew the First-Called above the town, which was under the protection of Czech KFOR troops. After the soldiers received orders to retreat, the crowd attacked the church, setting fire to it and using dynamite to blow up the altar (sanctuary) of the church. The Albanian masses then began a horrific celebration at the nearby Serbian cemetery where, according to the eyewitness testimony of Czech soldiers, they tore open the Serbian tombs and scattered the bones in them, destroying crosses and grave markers with infernal hatred and demonic fury. In addition to the church, the bell tower was also blown up and a 1,200-kilogram bell, a gift to the church from King Aleksandar Karadjordjević, was stolen. Soon thereafter Czech soldiers found the bell in an Albanian house and learned that the Albanians planned to sell it for 32,000 euros. On the second day, March 18, the Serbian cemetery in Uroševac was also systematically desecrated and destroyed. Three more Orthodox churches were also destroyed in the same area. Not far from Orahovac, the Albanians torched the church of St. Kyriake in Brnjača near Bela Crkva. At the same time the parish home was set on fire as confirmed by a KFOR report.

In the town of Dečani in the afternoon of March 18 a group of several hundred Albanians headed in the direction of Dečani Monastery with the intent of attacking the monastery. The mayor of Dečani and members of international police who deterred them from the attack stopped the crowd at the last moment. At the same time, as already mentioned, a mass of Albanians also headed in the direction of the Serb village of Svinjare located between Mitrovica and Vučitrn, some 600 meters from a French military base. Although KFOR and international police at first tried to prevent the Albanians from entering the village, they received orders to evacuate all the Serbs from the village instead. The Albanian mass then entered the village unobstructed, completely looted it and set fire to 150 Serbian houses. The bodies of two Serbs were later found in the rubble of the burning houses. In their fury the Albanians even killed domestic animals, especially pigs.

In the town of Vučitrn itself the Albanian crowd attacked the church of St. Elijah and set fire to the church and the parish hall, ending its pyre of destruction by dese-

crating the Orthodox cemetery. The church, already destroyed earlier, was completely unprotected by either members of KFOR or police. At the same time, another group of Albanians forced its way into a settlement of Roma and Ashkalia and began to torch and destroy their homes. More than 200 Ashkalis were evacuated.

On the afternoon on March 18 several thousand Albanians headed in the direction of Devič Monastery near Srbica with the intent of destroying the monastery. The French soldiers who have been protecting this holy shrine for five years panicked and ordered the sisters to evacuate, i.e. they literally grabbed them by the arm and fled with them by helicopter in the direction of Mitrovica. The monastery was left completely unprotected and full of the equipment of French KFOR. The Albanians first completely looted the monastery, removing everything that could be taken, including some parts of the wooden roof construction on the church; they then set fire to the church and all buildings in the monastery complex. The attackers used pickaxes to break the marble cover on the tomb of St. Ioannichius of Devič and tore apart the tomb's contents, finally setting fires around and inside the tomb. The Devič church was completely destroyed by flames with all sacred objects inside; the Holy Table was shattered. The walls still bear the acronyms of the UČK (Kosovo Liberation Army), the KZK (Kosovo Protection Corps), the ANA (Albanian National Army) and other Albanian terrorist organizations and groups. The looting of the monastery continued for days and everything surviving the initial attack was taken. In the meanwhile, the Bishop of Raška-Prizren and Kosovo-Metohija managed through a last minute intervention with the French KFOR command to prevent international troops from leaving Sokolica Monastery after the nuns had already been forcibly evacuated. After Bishop Artemije together with Bishop Atanasije of Zahumlje and Herzegovina (retired) pleaded and received assurances from KFOR that Sokolica Monastery would be protected, the sisterhood was returned and the evacuated nuns from Devič Monastery were also brought there. Unfortunately, French KFOR and its chaplains gave false assurances that Devič Monastery had not been torched. It was not until the evening of Sunday, March 20, that members of the Church escorted by international police were able to visit the burned ruins of Devič Monastery, and see and photograph the results of the terrible Albanian pogrom against this holy shrine.

The following day, March 19, the Serbian church in the village of Živiniane near Prizren was also dynamited.

Therefore, the violence carried out against the Serbian population, its holy shrines and homes on March 17–19, 2004, was an organized, pre-planned element of the general Albanian strategy of completely ethnically cleansing Kosovo and Metohija. The Albanian extremists and their political mentors showed in practice that the idea of an independent Kosovo hides a monstrous plan for the cre-

ation of an ethnically pure territory where no Orthodox Christian holy shrine will be spared and no trace of centuries-old Serbian culture and spirituality tolerated. After five years of silent observation of ethnic cleansing during which 112 Orthodox churches were permitted to be destroyed, KFOR and UNMIK experienced complete collapse and ruin during these two days. All laws, institutions, military and civilian organizations ceased to exist. Armed gangs torching and burning, attacking the unprotected Serb population ruled Kosovo and Metohija. The international mission found itself not just in the role of the silent observer but accomplice to ethnic cleansing because many incidents showed that its goal was not the protection of the Serb population, its property and holy shrines.

Two months after the March 2004 pogrom little in Kosovo and Metohija has changed for the better. The Serbs who were expelled still have not returned to their homes nor has the restoration of their houses even begun. Churches and monasteries still lie in ruins although the determined monks from Holy Archangels Monastery and nuns from Devič Monastery returned a month after the destruction of their respective monasteries to their burned remains to continue life in portable containers and tents. The main organizers and inciters of this terrorist and chauvenist pogrom have neither been found nor arrested. At the time of this writing, police managed to detain approximately 260 perpetrators directly involved in acts of vandalism. However, no Albanian leader, municipal administrator, minister of representative of the Kosovo provisional government has yet resigned. No one has been held accountable, even though it is common knowledge that Kosovo Albanian leaders, major media and the majority of mayors not only contributed to the atmosphere of a mass lynching by their war-mongering, nationalistic declarations but in many cases directly participated in the organization of the attacks.

In this March pogrom the Serbian community experienced yet another painful blow from which it will be difficult to recover. Most Serbs lack all confidence in the willingness of KFOR and UNMIK to protect the remaining Serbs. Many Serbs who were expelled directly accused the Kosovo police of taking part in the crimes but not one official from this organization has been held accountable. After March 17, 2004, the gradual departure of Serbs continued. It is very difficult to expect Serbs to return to their destroyed homes in Obilić, Prizren, Svinjare and Lipljan unless there is a change in the policy of the international community in Kosovo and Metohija. Taking into account that to date the reaction of the international community has been limited to rhetoric and that the number of KFOR troops has not been significantly increased, there is reason to seriously doubt the sincerity of preventing further ethnic cleansing and the destruction of the Serbs and their cultural heritage. Belgrade's reaction has also been chiefly limited to verbal condemnation and providing humanitarian assistance, which arrives in Kosovo and Metohija with difficulty.

The Serbian government finally presented a plan for local Serbian autonomy in Kosovo and Metohija which is an important attempt to advance the position and rights of the Serb population; however, under existing security conditions such a plan is difficult if not impossible to implement as KFOR does not effectively control the entire territory of the Province. Albanian terrorism is so well developed that two months after the March pogrom UNMIK practically no longer exists. In the meanwhile, attacks on (Serbs and Serbian property continue, several more homes in Lipljan have been torched and there has been an increase in theft of Serbian property and livestock).

The general assessment is that a new escalation of violence against Serbs is not only possible but also inescapable, and that without a radical change in the policy of the international community toward Kosovo and Metohija the survival of Serbs in this region is questionable. It is completely absurd that a territory where the international community has invested enormous sums of money and deployed strong NATO forces for the purpose of protecting multiethnicity and democracy will become the ethnically purest and most lawless part of the European continent. The policy of concession in the face of Albanian extremism and terrorism will boomerang on the international community, especially the European states because erroneous policy has created the foundation for the building of a terrorist state which will become a base for the destabilization of the entire Balkan peninsula and European continent.



LIST OF CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES DESTROYED OR DAMAGED DURING THE MARCH 2004 POGROM

Prizren

All Prizren churches and other buildings owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church were destroyed on March 17–18. Further attacks, looting and destruction occurred in the days that followed.

1. *Church of the Mother of God of Ljeviša* (14th century) burned interior, frescos from the 12th-14th centuries heavily damaged, altar section desecrated, Holy Table broken, parts of the architecture, especially decorations around windows and openings, heavily damaged.

2. *Church of Christ the Savior* (14th century) burned, frescos damaged.

3. *Cathedral of the Holy Great-Martyr George* (1856) burned and dynamited.

4. *Church of St. Nicholas* (Tutić's church, 14th century) burned interior, desecrated.

5. *Church of St. George* (Runović's church, 16th century) burned interior, frescos from 14th century seriously damaged.

6. *Church of St. Kyriake* (14th century, later rebuilt) burned, Potkaljaja.

7. *Church of St. Panteleimon* (14th century, later rebuilt) burned, Potkaljaja.

8. *Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian* (14th century, later rebuilt) burned, Potkaljaja.

9. *Church of St. Kyriake*, Živiniane near Prizren, dynamited. (KFOR/UNMIK report of March 19th: An explosion completely destroyed the Orthodox church in the village of Živiniane).

10. *Holy Archangels Monastery* (14th century), looted and burned in the presence of German soldiers who failed to protect it.

- *Seminary of Sts. Cyril and Methodius* (UNMIK/KFOR Report March 17—Orthodox Seminary in town center & 3 Orthodox churches set on fire.)

- *Bishop's residence in Prizren* (UNMIK/KFOR Report—March 18: Archbishop seat, Archangel Monastery, an Orthodox Church and Orthodox Seminary set on fire & destroyed). In addition to the Bishop's residence, another church building was destroyed which was inhabited by the sexton.

Orahovac

11. *Church of St. Kyriake* (1852), Brnjača near Orahovac 1852 (UNMIK/KFOR Report: March 18—Orthodox Church set on fire & destroyed in village of Brnjača). After the most recent visit by a Council of Europe delegation, it was established that the church was not burned but only forcibly entered. The parish home was burned to the ground.

Djakovica

12. *Church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God* (16th-19th centuries), burned together with the old and the new parish homes on March 17, subsequently leveled with the ground.

13. *Holy Trinity Cathedral* (Two bell towers that survived the dynamiting of the church in summer 1999 were leveled with the ground on March 17. In subsequent days the Albanians systematically removed the remnants of the church and built a park in its location. UNMIK /KFOR Report March 18—Rioters remove debris of destroyed Orthodox Church with trucks & trailers approx 5,000 K-Albanians participate).

14. *Church of St. Lazarus*, Piškote near Djakovica, damaged in 1999 and 2001, now completely destroyed together with the nearby cemetery. Parish home also damaged.

15. *Church of St. Elijah* near Bistražin, damaged in 1999, completely destroyed on March 17–18 by the planting of powerful explosives.

Srbica

16. *Devič Monastery* (15th century) burned to the ground, tomb of St. Ioannichius of Devič opened and desecrated. The Albanians also set fires around and inside the tomb.

(UNMIK/KFOR Report March 18: 2,000 protestors gather and move toward Deviĉ Monastery, Five K-Serbian nuns evacuated from area, Violent protestors set Monastery on fire). In the monastery complex about 20 different monastery utility buildings were destroyed (residential quarters, warehouses, barns, etc.).

Peć

17. *Church of St. John the Forerunner* (the so-called Metropolitanate with the parish home and priests' apartments), set on fire according to international sources on the scene. According to the latest available photographs, the church walls are intact even though the interior is completely destroyed. Signs of fire are visible.

18. *Church of the Most Holy Mother of God*, Belo Polje near Peć, set on fire in summer 1999. Restored at the end of 2003 together with about 20 returnee homes. Now again damaged by arson even though the church walls and roof have not sustained further damage. In addition to the church, the parish home was also set on fire.

Uroševac

19. *Cathedral of St. Uroš*, Uroševac, (UNMIK/KFOR Report: March 17—3 hand grenades thrown at Serbian Orthodox church—church set on fire, first time), at least 19 KFOR soldiers and policemen wounded defending the church, destroyed city cemetery (UNMIK/KFOR Report March 18 1,500 K-Albanians rampage—burn Orthodox Church & up to 5 K-Serb houses in town K-Albanian crowd attempts to set Orthodox Church on fire in K-Serb village of Talinovce Church was set to fire (1749 hrs)—5 K-Albanian males arrested). According to the latest information, the church walls are still standing although most of the interior is damaged by fire. The church is currently closed behind massive metal doors and under KFOR protection.

20. *Church of St. Elijah*, village of Varoš, destroyed together with local cemetery KFOR soldiers abandoned it (local international sources).

21. *Church of Sts. Peter and Paul* in Talinovci set on fire, Orthodox cemetery destroyed.

22. *Church of the Most Holy Mother of God* in the village of Sovtović, destroyed together with Orthodox cemetery (local international sources).

(On March 20, Athens media confirmed that three churches near Uroševac protected by Greek soldiers were left unprotected before an enormous mob of armed Albanians and that some Greek soldiers had been wounded in clashes with armed Albanians).

Kosovska Kamenica

23. Church in Donja Šišašnica near Kosovska Kamenica (local sources from Kamenica). Church sustained minimal damage.



The Church of the Most Holy Mother of God, located in Mušutište, built in 1315; Albanian extremists destroyed it in 1999 (see the photo below).



The Orthodox church in Kamenica was stoned and the glass on several windows was broken. Several nearby Serb houses were destroyed.

Štimlje

24. *Church of the Holy Archangel Michael* in Štimlje, built in 1920 (on the hill above the town) (UNMIK/KFOR Report: March 18: K-Serbian house & Orthodox Church set on fire) According to the latest information, the walls of the church are undamaged although the interior was further damaged and the icons destroyed. The bell tower was set on fire back in January 2004.

Priština

25. *Church of St. Nicholas* (16th century, restored beginning of 19th century) in Priština (UNMIK/KFOR Report: March

18—Rioters attack Old Orthodox Church in Taslixhe—automatic gunfire in area Orthodox priest & 5 K-Serbian families evacuated by KFOR from Old Orthodox Church SPU officer shot & injured during attempt to secure Old Orthodox Church Orthodox Church, UN Habitat office & 3 UNMIK Police vehicles set on fire). The church was set on fire together with the parish home; destroyed with it was a valuable engraved iconostasis, dozens of icons and the entire church archive (confirmed by Priština parish priest Fr. Miroslav Popadić). Near the church two old tombs were desecrated and broken and human bones in them can be seen.

Kosovo Polje

26. *Church of St. Nicholas* in Kosovo Polje, interior burned and desecrated. The church was built in 1940. The building is still standing although according to local Serb sources and eyewitness accounts the church interior is quite damaged.

27. *Church of St. Catherine* in Bresje near Kosovo Polje, broken into and desecrated. The church was recently also looted.

Vučitrn

28. *Church of St. Elijah* (19th century), looted and interior partially destroyed in June 1999, now completely burned. (UNMIK/KFOR Report March 17: Orthodox Church set on fire in Vučitrn town). The Orthodox cemetery next to the church was also destroyed together with the parish home and church utility buildings.

Obilić

29. *Church of St. Michael* in Obilić, newly built. Albanians set automobile tires on fire inside the church. (KFOR/UNMIK report of March 18: Obilić, Orthodox church, numerous Serb houses and apartments set on fire). The church walls remain intact but fire and high temperatures have damaged the interior.



Church of Saint Elijah, Vučitrn, 19th century.
Church interior after destruction in 2004.



Destroyed Orthodox cemetery in Vučitrn in 2004

Kosovska Mitrovica

30. *Church of St. Sava Church in southern Mitrovica* was set on fire twice in a row. (UNMIK/KFOR Report—March 18: Molotov cocktails thrown into perimeter of KFOR-guarded Orthodox Church in South, Church & several neighboring houses set on fire Local Fire Brigade fight house fires but not Church, which is severely damaged). In addition to the church, the attackers also set fire to the priest's home located in the churchyard.

Podujevo

31. *Church of St. Andrew the First-called* in Podujevo, built in 1929, destroyed on March 18. Czech media confirmed that Czech soldiers were forced to leave the church, which was destroyed together with the cemetery. A Czech officer confirmed in *The Prague Post* that he was deeply shocked by the fact that the Albanians dug up the human remains of the Serbs from their graves and scattered the bones (KFOR/UNMIK report of March 18: Orthodox church set on fire in Podujevo). According to photographs, the east wing of St. Andrew was dynamited and the bell tower was completely destroyed by explosives along with the wall enclosing the church.



Church of saint Elijah, Vučitrn, 19th century.
Church exterior after the fire in 2004.



Condition of the frescos on the west wall of the narthex before the fire, photo from 2002



Condition of the frescos on the west wall, and upper structure of the narthex after the fire in 2004



Heavily damaged fresco of Saint Sava, Saint Simeon Nemanja and King Stefan the First-Crowned on the west wall of the narthex of the Church of the Mother of God of Ljeviša (1308–1314). On March 17–18, 2004, the Church was burned inside by ethnic Albanians, frescos from the 12th–14th centuries were heavily damaged, altar section desecrated, Holy Table broken, parts of the architecture, especially decorations around windows and openings, heavily damaged. With its sublime architecture and fresco art it remains a living witness of the centuries old Serb Christian Orthodox presence in the city of Prizren. The Church of Virgin of Ljeviša is listed on the UNESCO World Culture Heritage as the extremely endangered Serbian Medieval monument of exceptional importance in Kosovo and Metohija.

The Mother of God with Christ the *Nourisher* after the fire in 2004



Images of the suffering of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, 2004.



The church of the Holy Mother of God—Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren, an old Byzantine temple, the seat of the Bishops of Prizren, renewed by Holy King Milutin